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ABSTRACT

This 3-lesson unit of study for grades 8-12 and adults considers the 250 million children who spend most of their day on the job, despite efforts to regulate or eliminate the practice of child labor. The unit focuses primarily on export-oriented businesses in the Americas. This focus serves as a starting point to understanding other forms of children's economic exploitation. To stimulate student interest, the unit incorporates various teaching techniques, including videos, role plays, and small-group work. The lessons include learner objectives, concepts, major questions, materials enclosed (handouts and appendices), and materials to obtain. Each lesson outlines a detailed teaching strategy that contains evaluation and assignment suggestions. The first lesson integrates the National Labor Committee video "Zoned for Slavery." The second lesson examines the conflict between corporate social responsibility and "the bottom line" through a role-play exercise about a U.S. athletic clothing firm with a plant in the Dominican Republic. The third lesson explores student actions that are forcing new policies and practices in the United States and elsewhere. (BT)

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A unit for grades 8–12 and adults
By Amy Sanders and Meredith Sommers

SO 031 854

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A three-lesson unit for grades 8–12 and adults.

By **AMY SANDERS** and **MEREDITH SOMMERS** with David Bacon, Joyce Bowers, Audrey Conant, Pam Costain, Pam Harens, the 9th–10th grade world-history students at Lincoln Academy (Newcastle, Maine), Le Lucht, Steve Sandell, Lynn Schultz and her 4th–6th graders at J.J. Hill Montessori School (St. Paul, Minnesota), Shelly Swayze, Mary Swenson and Larry Weiss. Copy-edited and designed by Chip Mitchell.

A Mexico City street worker.

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POSTER

Every child has the RIGHT...

To be loved.

To healthy food and medical care.

To protection from danger and cruelty.

To education and recreation.

To a name.

To belong to a nation.

To special help and care if disabled.

To her or his own identity, culture, language and religion.

To a world without pollution.

To be free from discrimination of any kind.

To a society with peace and friendship among all people.

Adapted from the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

RESOURCE CENTER OF THE AMERICAS

Why Kids Work

The number of children working in today's world is staggering. More than 250 million children, most in developing countries, spend much of their day on the job, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Half of them work full-time. They toil in factories and mines, home-based workshops and agricultural fields, streets and hotel rooms.

Many children work without adequate safeguards, most are paid substantially less than adults, and many are physically and emotionally abused. From Pakistani soccer-ball plants to Mexican onion farms, the conditions under which kids labor would seem more apt for 19th-century Britain — the Industrial Revolution — than for today's world. In some countries, the problem has grown only worse.

At the same time, efforts to address child labor have been a constant theme of the last 100 years. Within the United States and many other nations around the world, attempts to regulate or eliminate the practice have been successful. In addition to the reforms, children's rights have been firmly established by international laws and covenants, most notably the 1989 United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Of all the world's nations, the United States is among only six that have yet to ratify this measure.)

Why, then, does child labor persist?

It persists, in some cases, because it's important to the economies of a family, a community and a nation. In countries with many unemployed adults or inadequate wages, children must work to help their families survive.

Child labor also persists because powerful forces sustain it. Child workers, increasingly, are players in a global economy in which high profits rely on low wages, unregulated health-and-safety conditions, and a flexible and unorganized workforce.

Frequently child laborers live in poor countries that have little ability to set their own economic policies. Their governments, tied by trade agreements and staggering debt, are forced to compete in the global economy and take orders from international lending institutions. To obtain needed loans and foreign investment, many countries agree to "free trade" deals and "structural adjustment programs" that increase exports, decrease social spending, lower wages and privatize vast arenas of social and economic life.

These policies can exacerbate the use of child labor. For example, export agriculture drives poor, subsistence farmers off their land and into cities in search of work. This, in turn, expands the pool of urban unemployed, further depressing wages. Some unemployed parents become so desperate they send their children into the labor market. Because employers can pay less to children than to adults, profits go through the roof.

In the face of arguments that child labor is a phase of industrial development — a necessary step out of poverty — this teaching guide helps students consider whether child labor is a means of *perpetuating* inequality between the world's rich and poor.

If we are to break the chains of poverty and illiteracy that give kids few options other than work, it's important for us to understand those chains — the economic, social and political contexts in which children live and labor — and then to *do* something with that knowledge.

Child Labor Is Not Cheap focuses primarily on export-oriented businesses in the Americas. While the U.S. Labor Department estimates that only about 5 percent of the world's working children work directly in an export industry, their situation provides a window into the global economy. This focus is an excellent starting point to understand other forms of children's economic exploitation.

If we are to break the chains of poverty and illiteracy that give kids few options other than work, it's important for us to understand those chains — the economic, social and political contexts in which children live and labor — and then to *do* something with that knowledge. To stimulate student interest, *Child Labor Is Not Cheap* incorporates various teaching techniques, including videos, role plays and small-group work. Using this guide, educators need not be experts, but facilitators and learners themselves.

INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

Scavenging for a living in Bogotá, Colombia

When I approached this topic in my high school classroom, I wanted students to have as much autonomy as possible — to raise questions and issues, pursue connections among ideas, and learn from their classmates. The complex subject lent itself to this approach. Students discussed the factors behind the use of child labor, potential solutions, and implications of those solutions. We did not reach agreement or consensus — this wasn't the goal. Rather, I aimed for students to identify and define a problem, raise questions and find information, recognize the values and assumptions associated with that problem, identify alternatives, predict consequences, and determine how to respond and act.

My personal hope is that your study of child labor is a collective effort in which everyone becomes an active learner and that we work together toward a more equitable and just future for all children.

— Amy Sanders

Amy Sanders teaches high-school social studies in Portland, Maine.

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The Hard Realities

Around the world, children and adolescents are laboring in streets, houses, fields and factories. Approximately 250 million children, including one-quarter of kids in the developing world, go to work for much of the day, according to a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, *The 1997 State of the World's Children*. Many kids have more than one job. While it would be a mistake to lump together all types of work performed by these children, it's important to understand some troubling themes: the kids' young age, their exploitative and hazardous working conditions, and their lack of access to education.

To explore these themes, this lesson focuses on the thousands of Latin American children who manufacture apparel in *maquiladoras* (factories, usually foreign-owned, that assemble goods for export). *Maquilas*, as the word is often shortened, seek child laborers because young people are perceived to be industrious, obedient, easily trained and, most important, cheap. This lesson exposes the workers' hard life — the young faces behind the labels on many consumer goods.

First, students look at their own clothing labels to see where the garments were made. To understand the working conditions in apparel factories, the students watch a video about a *maquila* in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Students also compare the drastic differences between wages in various countries, and examine the increasing use of labor in the poorer countries to produce goods for consumers in the wealthier countries.

The lesson also provides a starting point for students to conduct their own research on child labor. After collecting information through the Internet and other me students share their findings with othe. This helps them understand the harsh working conditions and the complex economic, political and cultural factors that put children to work.

Finally, it's important students understand that action can end the worst abuses of child laborers. This lesson, therefore, includes a brief history of international efforts to protect children. (Lesson 3, expanding on this theme, shows students how they can help advance the efforts.)

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

- Understand *maquiladoras* and their use of child laborers.
- Understand globalization and links between economic, political and social forces in perpetuating child labor.
- Develop research skills using electronic media.

CONCEPTS

- Child labor.
- *Maquiladora*.
- Global economy.
- Free-trade zone.
- Union.
- Labor law.

MAJOR QUESTIONS

- What is child labor? How can it be defined?
- How widespread is child labor? How many children work? At what ages?
- What hazards do child laborers face?
- Why do children work?

EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

U.S. workers are losing jobs to overseas manufacturers. More and more consumer goods, especially clothing and shoes, are assembled in other countries. It's easy to find labels indicating that products were made overseas, but it's harder to learn about the workers behind those labels. This lesson provides insights into the living and working conditions of child laborers in the Americas.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Video.
- Research.
- Discussion.

MATERIALS ENCLOSED

- *Handout 1A*: Kids in the Fields (story) and From Kitchens to Beet Fields.
- *Handout 1B*: 'Hire Rosa for 57 Cents an Hour!' (advertisement).
- *Handout 1C*: Work and Basic Necessities (chart).
- *Handout 1D*: Your Research (notetaking guide).
- *Handout 1E*: Efforts to Protect Children (international history).
- *Appendix 1A*: Viewers Will Relate (video review).
- *Appendix 1B*: Effects of Higher Wages (a calculation).
- *Appendix 1C*: Research Sources.

MATERIALS TO OBTAIN

- *Zoned for Slavery: The Child Behind the Label*, a 23-minute VHS video produced in 1995 by the National Labor Committee and Crowing Rooster Arts (see Appendix 1A for a critical review). Purchase it for $15 from the National Labor Committee, 275 7th Ave., New York, NY 10001, (212) 242-3002, (212) 242-3821 (fax). Or, in the Twin Cities area only, borrow it for $5 from the Resource Center of The Americas, 317 17th Ave. SE, Minneapolis, (612) 627-9445.

REQUIRED TIME

- One or more class periods (depending on student research).

TEACHER PREPARATION

Photocopy for Each Student:

- Handout 1A (optional) and Handout 1E.
- Handout 1D (optional) for research.
- Handout 2A and Handout 2B for homework.

Copy onto Transparencies:

- Handout 1B and Handout 1C.

Draw on the Board:

- Four columns with headings (from left) "Where?" "Who?" "Their Pay" and "Your Pay."

SET UP

- A video-cassette player and monitor.
- An overhead projector.

SEQUENCE

ANTICIPATORY SET

1. To begin a discussion of the apparel industry, ask students to examine the labels on the clothes they are wearing to see where they were made. Make a list of their responses on the board under the "Where?" heading.

2. Ask students for hypotheses on how their clothes were made. Who sewed them? How much per hour were the workers paid? How much *should* they have been paid? For example, should the workers have received pay that equals a quarter of the garment's retail price? Half? List their ideas on the board under the appropriate headings.

3. Ask students how many of them work and what their hourly wages are. List the wages on the board under the "Your Pay" heading.

BODY

4. Tell students that this lesson will reveal the connection between their clothes and the people who made them. Explain that, in many cases, the face behind the label belongs to a child. If you wish, cite the 1997 UNICEF estimate that 250 million children, including one-quarter of kids in the developing world, spend much of their day on the job.

5. Define these words and phrases:
child labor Work performed by children, often under hazardous or exploitative conditions. This does not include all work by kids — children almost everywhere, for example, do chores to help their families. Refer to the 1989 United Nations' Conven-

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

tion on the Rights of the Child, which calls for protection "against economic exploitation and against carrying out any job that might endanger well-being or educational opportunities, or that might be harmful to health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development."

maquiladora A factory, often foreign-owned, that assembles goods for export. From Spanish, the word is pronounced *mah-kee-lah-DOH-rah*, and is usually shortened to *maquila* (*mah-KEE-lah*).

free-trade zone An industrial area in which a country allows foreign companies to import material for production and export finished goods without paying significant taxes or duties (fees to the government). A free-trade zone thus decreases a company's production costs.

6. Introduce the video *Zoned for Slavery* (reviewed in Appendix 1A). Explain that it takes place in a free-trade zone near San Pedro Sula, the second largest city in Honduras, a country in Central America. You may wish to locate Honduras on a map. We recommend previewing the video to familiarize yourself with it before the screening for students.

7. (Optional) If you already have seen the video or wish to supplement it, pass out copies of Handout 1A, which describes child labor in export-agriculture businesses in northwestern Mexico.

8. Ask students to consider these questions as they watch the video (or read Handout 1A):

- What is the predominant age and gender of the workers?
- Which working conditions do you think are exploitative or demeaning?
- How do the managers treat the workers?
- Do the workers have opportunities to go to school?
- Would you trade places with them?

9. After screening the video (or reading Handout 1A), discuss the above questions. Solicit student reactions.

10. On the overhead projector, display Handout 1B, the advertisement for reliable, cheap labor in El Salvador. Ask students for their reactions to the ad. Refer to their responses on the board about their own hourly wages, and ask how many of them would be willing to work for 57 cents an hour. Refer to Appendix 1B to discuss the effects of higher wages on consumer goods.

11. To compare wages between countries, students must understand that a worker's "earning power" is drastically lower in Latin America than in the United States. Put Handout 1C on the overhead, and review with students the number of hours a Mexican must work to buy basic household items. (Elsewhere in Latin America, the data would be similar.)

12. (Optional) As noted at the bottom of Handout 1C, students may compare the Mexican earning power to their own earning power by finding prices of the same goods at a nearby grocery store. (This activity requires photocopying Handout 1C for each student instead of making a single transparency.)

13. (Optional) We strongly suggest giving students time to do their own research into the many reasons children work, their working conditions and so forth. The World Wide Web is an excellent way to study the problem in particular industries, countries and regions (for a list of sites, see Appendix 1C). To guide students in their research, distribute a copy of Handout 1D. Suggest that students take special note of efforts to end child labor (this will help for Lesson 3). Students can discuss their research with the entire class or in small groups.

14. Conclude by explaining that there are national and international laws to protect child laborers. Distribute Handout 1E and discuss the questions at the bottom.

EVALUATION

15. Ask students to write in journals about their reactions to the video. Which person or event made the greatest impression on them? What did they learn from the video? What might be done to improve conditions for the *maquiladora* workers?

ASSIGNMENT

16. Distribute copies of Handout 2A (the story, "A Company's Dilemma") and Handout 2B (the notetaking guide). For homework, ask each student to read the case and complete as much of the worksheet as they can. The worksheet is optional, but it will enhance students' understanding and provide background for Lesson 2. ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP 7

Kids in the Fields

BY DAVID BACON

Mexicali Valley, Baja California, Mexico

From a distance, the green-onion field looks almost festive. Strung between pieces of iron rods, dozens of colored cloth sheets ripple in the morning breeze and shelter workers from the Mexicali Valley sun. The soft conversation of hundreds of people, sitting in rows next to great piles of green onions, fills the air. The vegetable's pungent scent is everywhere. Wandering among the workers are toddlers, some nursing on baby bottles and others chewing on the onions. A few sleep in the rows, and some in vegetable bins in makeshift beds of blankets.

U.S. companies in Mexico use child labor to produce vegetables for U.S. consumers

But the toddlers aren't the only children in this field. Dozens of the workers, perhaps a quarter, range in age from 6 to 16. The foreman, who doesn't reveal his name, says it's normal for his 300-person crew to include entire families, youngsters and all. The workers, he says, are employed by the Oxnard, California–based Muranaka Farms.

The children are some of the hidden victims of the North American Free Trade Agreement, a controversial deal between the United States, Mexico and Canada. Since NAFTA took effect in 1994, U.S. growers such as Muranaka have relocated production across the border. Their profiteering, subsidized by the Mexican government, intensified an economic crisis marked by the December 1994 plunge in the value of Mexican currency. As the incomes of poor Mexicans dropped by almost half, desperation pushed new waves of children into the fields. Thousands of kids now produce crops destined for dinner tables in northern cities around the world, from Minneapolis to Tokyo.

David Bacon is an associate editor of Pacific News Service.

Targeting these markets, joint ventures between Mexican and U.S. growers "are achieving greater competitiveness at the cost of children working in the fields," says Gema López Limón, an education professor at the Autonomous University of Baja California, who investigates child labor in agriculture. "We're creating a workforce without education, condemned to the lowest wages and to periods of great unemployment."

ACQUIESCENCE: Like the United States, Mexico outlaws child labor. Article 123 of the nation's constitution says children under 14 may not work, and those between 14 and 16 may work only six hours a day. Article 22 of the federal labor law likewise bars employment under 14, and permits work between 14 and 16 only by special permission and only if the children have completed an elementary education.

While government statistics do not track the number of working children, Mexico's Labor and Social Forecasting Secretariat estimates that various economic sectors employ a total of 800,000 workers under 14. Based on the 1990 census, the Public Education Secretariat guesses that more than 2.5 million kids between 6 and 14 don't attend school.

The second International Independent Tribunal Against Child Labor, held in Mexico City in March 1996, concluded that the economic forces behind expanded Mexican child labor were having the same effect in other countries. The number of working children globally has climbed to more than 250 million, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO). "Trade agreements like NAFTA and [the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] promised protections for workers," López testified. "But they don't prohibit child labor, they regulate it."

After three days of testimony by witnesses from 18 countries, the tribunal

HANDOUT 1A
PAGE 2 of 3

Six-year-old Honorina Ruiz bundles green onions in a field owned by U.S.-based Muranaka Farms. The onions, grown and packed in Mexico, are exported to the United States and other countries.

called for ratifying the 1973 ILO Convention 138, which bans labor by school-age children. Only 58 countries had signed the pact, and neither Mexico nor the United States had ratified it. María Estela Ríos González, president of the Mexican National Association of Democratic Lawyers, says international support for the convention buckled under big-business pressure.

To upstage the ILO blanket ban on child labor, the United Nations formulated another convention, Number 32, in 1989. This one, while decrying child labor, allows each nation to determine an age at which children may work and to regulate the circumstances of their labor. Mexico and many other countries that refuse to ratify the ILO measure have adopted the U.N. approach. Free-market champions have rallied behind the U.N. convention because they hope regulating child labor will undermine efforts to eliminate it.

"We cannot substitute the labor of countless children for the inadequate income of their parents," Ríos González says. "During all the history of humanity, adults have been the protectors and nurturers of children. Now children are nurturing and protecting the adults. We are robbing them of their future."

DROP-OUTS: María, 12, works alongside her mother in the Muranaka field. "My grandmother told me this year that we didn't have enough money for me to go to school," she says. "At first I stayed home to take care of my little sister, but it was boring, and sometimes it was scary being by ourselves all day. So I came to work here. We need the money."

Honorina Ruiz, 6, sits nearby in front of a green-onion pile. She lines up eight or nine onions, straightening out their roots and tails. Then she knocks off the dirt, puts a rubber band around them, and adds the bunch to a box beside her. Too shy to say more than her name, she seems proud to be able to do what her brother Rigoberto, at 13, has become very good at.

Some 3,000 children work in Mexicali Valley's green-onion harvest, says López, the education professor. The October-June growing season, which coincides with the academic year, hurts school attendance. While the valley's population has increased in recent years — the city of Mexicali alone boasts more than 600,000 inhabitants — rural schools keep losing children.

At the Alfredo A. Uchurtu primary school in the heart of the green-onion district, teacher Pedro González Hernández says 40 of 252 enrollees had dropped out by the end of the 1995–1996 season. Attendance began to fall in 1987, when the school had 363 kids. "That's the year we had the first economic collapse in Mexico," he recalls.

"Not only can't they come, but often they don't want to," González admits. "With all the problems they've had in keeping up, when they do come, they face blame."

"We've tried to devise a kind of study that these children can do at home," he adds. "It will never be as good as attending class, but at least it's some alternative."

In another effort, Baja California teach-

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HANDOUT 1A
PAGE 3 4

ers have convinced the state government to offer $15.73 a month and food coupons to rural children who would otherwise have to work. Twenty-five kids at Uchurtu get the allowance, and all of them are still in class. But the program lacks funds to help all the kids who need it, and some government officials are rumored to have diverted allowances for their own children.

Even with more funds and proper administration, such measures would likely fall short in the NAFTA era. "What drives children into the fields is that the wages their parents receive isn't enough to support the family," González says.

'What drives children into the fields is that the wages their parents receive isn't enough to support the family'

In 1996, Mexicali Valley companies paid about $.11 for a dozen bunches of onions. For an adult, a good day's work amounted to $6.66. A young child, on the other hand, would produce enough to earn only about $3. Field workers said the growers hadn't raised the piece rate since 1995, despite grocery price hikes. In 1996, a gallon of milk rose from $2 to $2.33, more than a third of an adult's daily wages.

Adults and children work the same day, usually from 5:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is no overtime pay, except for work on Sunday. The Muranaka field had just one portable bathroom for the whole crew. A metal drum on wheels held drinking water. The climate adds to the misery. Mexicali Valley, extending south from the border of California and Arizona, is an irrigated desert. In late spring, despite the cloth shelters, it gets brutally hot. In winter, the temperature can drop to freezing.

FLIGHT: Muranaka is among numerous U.S. vegetable producers that operate in Mexico. Besides the green onions, the produce includes spinach, radishes, cilantro, parsley, kale, leeks and beets — all processed in Mexicali Valley packing sheds.

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

Carisa Wright of Muranaka Farms says her firm considers its Mexican operations profitable, and is expanding them. "Most of our operations are labor intensive, so we do save money on labor costs by comparison with those in the U.S.," she notes.

Muranaka management would not answer specific questions about its use of children. "As far as we know," a company letter states, "our growers comply in the fullest with Mexican federal and state labor laws to the best of their abilities." Workers, the letter adds, "are over the minimum legal working age."

Tom Nunes of the Nunes Company, a large vegetable grower based in Salinas, California, contracts with a Mexicali Valley grower. The grower cultivates the onions, packs them in ice, and sends them to Nunes. Nunes sells the onions at market prices, then gives the grower what's left after deducting for seeds, cartons, loading, customs duties, and a sales charge. Nunes estimates he profits only $.01 per bunch.

Could the company sell the bunch for an extra penny to raise field-worker wages? "There's no incentive for us to do that," Nunes responds. "There are no green onions grown now in the U.S. in the winter, because they can't compete with the price of those grown in Mexico."

"I wouldn't go over there if this competition didn't exist," he says. "The power of the market is stronger than all of us."

Calling it a free market, however, would be a mistake. To lure U.S. investment, the Mexican government promises a low-wage workforce and a wealth of subsidies. Direct assistance starts with irrigated water, which is much cheaper in Mexicali Valley than across the border in California's Imperial Valley.

"What we need is to produce food, first, for people to eat here in Mexico, where people are actually hungry and where no one buys these green onions," says López, the education professor. "Then, if we have extra capacity to produce, we can sell the rest on the market in the U.S. or anywhere else. The government makes the same kind of argument about the *maquiladoras* (export-oriented assembly plants) — that they bring jobs. Yes, but are they jobs with a future that a family can live on?" ■

HANDOUT 1A
PAGE 4 4

SNAPSHOTS

From Kitchens to Beet Fields

BY CHIP MITCHELL

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 17.5 million children ages 5–14 are working, many of them full time, according to a 1996 International Labor Organization estimate. Whether sewing in one of Disney's Haitian sweatshops or hustling on a Rio de Janeiro street corner, they are players in the same global economy.

BRAZIL: Kids on sugar plantations cut cane with machetes, which puts them at constant risk of mutilation. In many sugar regions, kids make up a third of the workforce and suffer more than 40 percent of on-the-job accidents, according to the *1997 State of the World's Children*, published by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

COLOMBIA: Hundreds of boys as young as age 6 work in labor-intensive coal mining, usually 4 a.m.–noon, five or six days a week, according to a 1994 study cited in the U.S. Labor Department's 1995 *By the Sweat and Toil of Children: The Use of Child Labor in American Imports*. The youngest carry water or lead mules from the mines. The older kids dig with pikes and carry heavy sacks of coal on their backs. They all face hazards such as landslides, floods, fires, explosions and gas poisoning. About three-quarters of the coal is exported, including a big portion to the United States.

INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

A family's desperation has forced this boy out of school and into the Colombian orange harvest.

GUATEMALA: In 1995, Seattle-based Starbucks Coffee pledged to improve conditions for its Guatemalan workers. The company promised safe and sanitary working conditions as well as protection for unionizing activities. Two years later, according to the United States/Guatemala Labor Education Project, Starbucks coffee pickers still included young children, the workers were not protected from pesticides, and they had insufficient waste and housing facilities. In 1997, an entire family earned a daily average of $1.50, not enough for a single cup of Starbucks coffee in the United States.

UNITED STATES: Some 5.5 million U.S. children under age 18 work legally and illegally, according to the National Consumer League. With 200,000 minors injured and 100 killed on the job each year, the country ranks lowest in both categories among industrialized nations, reports the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Migrant and seasonal agriculture alone employs roughly 1 million children under age 15, according to the United Farm Workers of America. Prostitution rings employ another 100,000 U.S. minors, estimates UNICEF. In Minnesota, primarily in the sugar-beet fields of the Red River and Minnesota River valleys, hundreds of children go to work with their parents, according to the University of Minnesota Migrant Project. They spend as long as 12 hours a day thinning plants or picking up rocks. Some farm fields are unregulated, which allows owners to pay families by the acre, leaving them with sub-minimum wages.

URUGUAY: Many rural, poor parents have no choice but to hand over their daughters for domestic service to wealthier, usually urban, families. An International Labor Organization survey of domestic workers in Uruguay found that 34 percent had begun working by age 14. Usually paid little or nothing, the workers are often deprived of schooling and social activity. They are also vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. ■

Chip Mitchell is editor of Connection to the Americas, the membership magazine of the Resource Center of The Americas.

'Hire Rosa for 57 Cents an Hour!'

This advertisement appeared in the August 1990 edition of *Bobbin*, a trade magazine of the U.S. garment industry. When the ad appeared a year later, it had been changed to, "You can hire Rosa Martinez for *33 cents* an hour." (Emphasis added.)

Quality, Industriousness and Reliability Is What El Salvador Offers You!

Rosa Martinez produces apparel for U.S. markets on her sewing machine in El Salvador. You can hire her for 57 cents an hour*.

Rosa is more than just colorful. She and her co-workers are known for their industriousness, reliability and quick learning. They make El Salvador one of the best buys in the C.B.I. In addition, El Salvador has excellent road and sea transportation (including Central America's most modern airport) . . . and there are no quotas.

Find out more about sourcing in El Salvador. Contact FUSADES, the private, non-profit and non-partisan organization promoting social and economic development in El Salvador. Miami telephone: 305/381-8940.

* - Does not include fringe benefits.

Visit us in Bobbin Show Booth 35/42 Circle #43 on Reader Service Card Bobbin, August 1990 121

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

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Work and Basic Necessities

A typical worker in Mexico earns about 26 pesos ($3.60) a day. This chart shows how many paid hours it takes to buy a few basic necessities. The figures reflect average prices in Tijuana, the city across the border from San Diego. A kilogram is 2.2 pounds.

NECESSITY	HOURS OF WORK
Beans, 1 kilogram	4 hours
Rice, 1 kilogram	1 hour, 26 minutes
Tomatoes, 1 kilogram	1 hour, 35 minutes
Beef, 1 kilogram	8 hours
Chicken, 1 kilogram	3 hours
Eggs, 1 dozen	2 hours, 24 minutes
Milk, 1 gallon	4 hours, 17 minutes
Toilet paper, 1 roll	43 minutes
Diapers, a box of 30	11 hours, 30 minutes
Shampoo, 10 ounces	2 hours, 25 minutes
School uniform (mandatory)	57–86 hours
One school book	17–20 hours
Aspirin, a bottle of 20	2 hours, 25 minutes

Source: Fall 1996 *Cross-Border Connection*, the newsletter of the Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers.

ACTIVITY: Go to a grocery store and check the prices of the same items. Then calculate how many hours of work, at *your* wage, it would take for you to buy them (a kilogram equals 2.2 pounds).

NECESSITY	HOURS OF WORK
Beans, 1 kilogram	_____
Rice, 1 kilogram	_____
Tomatoes, 1 kilogram	_____
Beef, 1 kilogram	_____
Chicken, 1 kilogram	_____
Eggs, 1 dozen	_____
Milk, 1 gallon	_____
Toilet paper, 1 roll	_____
Diapers, a box of 30	_____
Shampoo, 10 ounces	_____
School uniform (mandatory)	_____
One school book	_____
Aspirin, a bottle of 20	_____

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

NOTETAKING GUIDE

Your Research

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR COUNTRY OR REGION: _____

DIRECTIONS

Find information about each of the categories for the country or region you are researching. Write in as much as possible on each question. Write down your source(s) for each answer. Keep in mind that the child-labor definition requires hazardous or exploitative working conditions that endanger a child's well-being, educational opportunities, health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

- How many child laborers?
- Which industries employ child laborers?
- Why do the children work?

WORK CONDITIONS

- How are the children treated?
- What hazards and risks do they face?

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Why does the country (or why do countries in the region) allow child labor?
- Why do the companies hire children even when it's illegal?
- What are some of the economic, social and political reasons?

RESPONSES

- Who is responsible for the welfare of children?
- Is anyone working on a solution? Who?
- What are they doing?

INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

Efforts to Protect Children

1919: In the first session of the International Labor Organization (ILO), Convention Number 5 sets **14 as the minimum age** of industrial employees. By September 1996, 72 nations will have ratified the convention.

1930: ILO Convention Number 29 bans all forms of **"forced or compulsory labor"** — any work or service exacted involuntarily and under threat of penalty. By September 1996, 139 nations will have ratified the convention.

1966: Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 8) bars **slavery, servitude and forced labor.** The covenant will take effect in 1976. By September 1996, 135 nations will have ratified it.

1966: Adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 10) requires nations to protect young people from economic exploitation and employment harmful to their **health, lives or moral development.** in 1976. The covenant will take effect in 1976. By September 1996, 135 nations will have ratified it.

A market vender dreams in Acapulco, Mexico

DAVID L. RANSON

1973: ILO Convention Number 138 sets a minimum age for work in *any* economic sector at not less than the age of **completing compulsory education** and **not less than 15.** The convention sets a minimum of age 18 for work likely to jeopardize health, safety or morals. By September 1996, 49 nations will have ratified it.

1976: ILO Recommendation 146 calls on nations to set a **minimum employment age of 16.**

1989: The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 32), recognizing children's right to be protected from work that threatens their health, education or development, requires nations to set **minimum ages for employment** and to regulate **working conditions.** By September 1996, 187 nations will have ratified the convention.

1996: The ILO proposes a new convention on **hazardous** child labor or the elimination of the most intolerable forms of child labor.

QUESTIONS

- What are some similarities and differences between these international laws?
- Why do you think new laws were added throughout the years?
- Which of these documents do you think the United States has signed or ratified? Do some research to find out! ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

Adapted from "How Can I Study?" in the February 1997 *Social Education*

VIDEO REVIEW

Viewers Will Relate

Zoned for Slavery: The Child Behind the Label. *Produced by the National Labor Committee. 1995. 23 minutes. Available for $15 from the committee, (212) 242-3002, (212) 242-3821 (fax), or, in the Twin Cities, on loan for $5 at the Resource Center of The Americas, 317 17th Ave. SE, Minneapolis; (612) 627-9445.*

BY LE LUCHT AND PAM HARENS

Holding a Van Heusen shirt, Charles Kernagan of the New York–based National Labor Committee stands in a garbage dump outside a *maquiladora* in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. "When you buy a shirt that's made off-shore, do you ever dream where it comes from?" he asks. "Do you ever dream who makes it?"

Thus begins *Zoned for Slavery*, an investigation of *maquilas* that produce clothing for the U.S. market. The video then provides a history and overview of "free-trade zones" in Central America and the Caribbean. Over images of dozens of young people trudging toward San Pedro Sula factories, a narrator reminds us that while youths in the United States attend school, at least half a million adolescents in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic work six days a week — from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. — without hope of getting an education or building a better future.

The rise of *maquilas* in poor nations, where labor is cheap, has accompanied plant closings in the United States, where employees were relatively well-paid. The video says U.S. corporations that contract with *maquilas* are putting workers in a "race to the bottom." The companies pit young Third World laborers against U.S. workers to see who will toil for the lowest salary, for the fewest benefits, and under the worst conditions.

In the free-trade zones, *maquila* owners employ armed security officers to obstruct investigators and journalists who wish to document the conditions and abuses. The video, nevertheless, manages to follow a day in the life of Lesley, a 15-year-old San Pedro Sula *maquila* worker.

As profits for the U.S. companies go through the roof, *maquila* workers are exploited, excluded from legal protections, and denied their human rights. They are considered cogs in a production wheel. U.S. consumers, meanwhile, save only pennies on their clothing.

As children play in a muddy pool and a little girl sits on her bike with a Barbie doll, Jorge Sierra of the National Labor Committee explains how young *maquila* workers become convinced that life is but a series of injustices. It's immoral, he says, that *maquilas* are destroying their hope for the future.

A weakness of *Zoned for Slavery* is that its facts are one-sided. The video largely ignores perspectives of U.S. companies and *maquila* owners.

But it does credibly expose the plight of the young workers and inspire viewer action to reform industries that rely on *maquilas*. Testimonials from teenage workers are particularly effective — young viewers would pay less attention if the same information came from adults. Viewers with poorly paid jobs themselves will relate even more. And people of all ages will recognize well-known clothing brands. ■

Le Lucht teaches Spanish at Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Worthington, Minnesota. Pam Harens teaches Spanish at Eastview High School in Apple Valley, Minnesota. Both use *Zoned for Slavery* in their classrooms.

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A CALCULATION

Effects of Higher Wages

BY LARRY WEISS

When we talk to clothing retailers about requiring better wages for the workers who make our clothes, they often tell us that wages must be held low so that U.S. consumers can have inexpensive products. Let's examine this claim, using the example of the GAP T-shirt from the video *Zoned for Slavery*.

The shirt sold for $20. The workers producing the shirt in El Salvador were paid $.56 an hour. Based on how many shirts they sewed each hour, they received about $.12 per shirt.

In 1994, the Salvadoran government calculated that *maquiladora* wages were only 23 percent of what it took to support a family at a bare-subsistence level.

NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE

Teenage women stream into a *maquiladora* at Galaxy Industrial Park in Choloma, Honduras, where they will assemble clothing for the U.S. market.

Suppose we could wave a magic wand and quadruple the wage, so workers earned enough for the bare subsistence. Would the price of the $20 shirt quadruple as well?

Let's do the math. Quadrupling the $.56-per-hour creates an hourly rate of $2.24 — not good, but much better.

Assuming the workers would still sew at the same pace, quadrupling the wage would mean that they would earn $.48 per shirt. How much have we added to the cost of producing the shirt? That's right, only $.36.

Now, let's assume that this entire increased cost were passed along to the consumer. The $20 shirt would now sell for $20.36, a difference most U.S. consumers would not even notice. The company would not lose one penny in profit.

Why is it that a large wage increase would produce such a small increase in the shirt price? Because wages are a very tiny portion of the cost of the shirt. In fact, multiplying the wages by 10 — raising them to $5.60 per hour — would add only $1.20 to the shirt's retail price, raising it to $21.20, and still causing no loss at all in company profit. ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

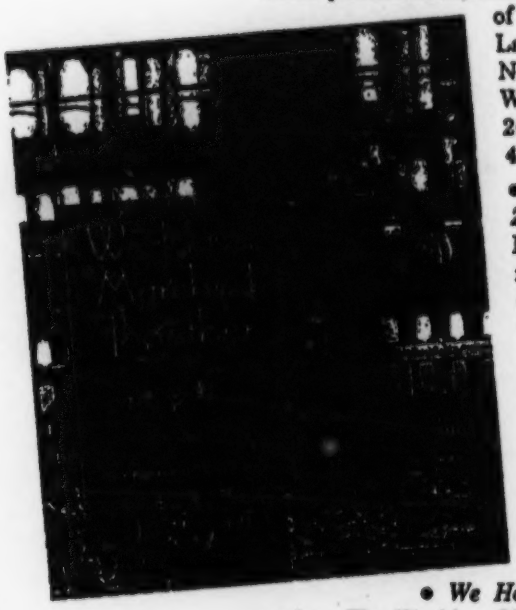
Larry Weiss coordinates the Resource Center's labor project.

Research Sources

PRINT

• *By the Sweat and Toil of Children: The Use of Child Labor in American Imports*, 1994 and 1995, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-1308, 200 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20210. (202) 208-4843. Yearly reports on the use of child labor to produce U.S. imports.

• *Children Without Childhoods*, and many other publications, American Federation of Teachers, Child Labor Project, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. (202) 879-4502 (fax).



• *In the Twilight Zone*, 1995, Maggie Black, International Labor Office, C-H-1211, Geneva 22, Switzerland. $12. A look at child workers in the tourism and catering industries of Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

• *We Have Marched Together: The Working Children's Crusade*, 1997, 88 pages, Stephen Currie, Lerner Publications Company, 241 1st Ave N., Minneapolis, MN 55401. (612) 332-3344. The story of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones and a cadre of child workers who, in 1903, marched against deplorable working conditions in New York and Philadelphia.

• *no sweat: fashion, free trade and the rights of garment workers*, 1997, 300 pages, Andrew Ross (editor), Verso, 180 Varick St., New York, NY 10014. An easy-to-read commentary with photos on labor conditions, campaigns and the fashion industry.

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

VIDEO

• *Central American Children Speak: Our Lives and Our Dreams*, 1994, Resource Center of The Americas, (612) 627-9445, 40 minutes, $75 with 25-page study guide (loaned for $10 if picked up at the Resource Center, 317 Seventeenth Ave. SE, Minneapolis). A look at the lives, hopes and fears of seven Guatemalan and Nicaraguan youths.

• *I Am a Child*, 1996, 52 minutes, International Labor Organization, C-H-1211, Geneva 22, Switzerland. Images and personal stories of despair and hope from children at work. Accompanied by the study guide *Stop! Child Labor*.

• *Shackled Children*, 1993, Hubert DuBois, International Labor Organization, (202) 653-7652; 1993, 55 minutes. Available at no charge (address above). Six segments focusing on six countries, including U.S. migrant workers.

• *Tomorrow We Will Finish*, 1994, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 26 minutes. Distributed by Maryknoll World Productions, (800) 227-8523. The story of a young girl working in a rug factory in Nepal and how the Nepalese government addresses child labor.

• *Zoned for Slavery: The Child Behind the Label*, 1995, National Labor Committee, 23 minutes. Available for $15 from the committee, (212) 242-3002 or (212) 242-3821 (fax). Available on loan for $5 if picked up at the Resource Center of The Americas, 317 17th Ave. SE, Minneapolis; (612) 627-9445. (See review, Appendix 1A). A Spanish version, *Zona de Esclavitud*, is also available.

WORLD WIDE WEB

• *www.igc.org/igc/issues/hr/* (children's rights page).

• *laborrights@igc.apc.org* (e-mail of the International Labor Rights Fund).

• *www.essential.org* (Child Labor Coalition).

• *www.uniteunion.org/sweatshops/sweatshp.html* (UNITE! Campaign Against Sweatshops).

• *www.unicef.org/sowc96/about.htm* (United Nations Children's Fund — UNICEF).

• *www.freethechildren.org* (Free the Children). ■

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE

A Case Study

Now that students have become familiar with the issue of child labor, they can begin exploring its complexities. They can develop a better understanding of why so many children work. They can understand the phenomenon in its broadest context by examining different views of child labor — some call it exploitation; others call it an inevitable phase of economic development. Students can analyze potential solutions.

In this lesson, students first read a case study that examines a company torn between following its own guidelines against child labor and honoring the "bottom line." Next, a role play provides a chance to debate and discuss the issues in the case. After this exercise, students set aside their roles and share their own views.

The discussion following the role play is likely to be rich and lively. Moderate the discussion and encourage students to question and debate one another. A few possible questions: Who benefits most from child labor? Doesn't it provide much-needed employment and income for poor families? If children didn't work, what would happen to them and their families? Can child labor be eradicated? What kinds of laws could control or end child labor? Could employers circumvent such laws? How could this be prevented? If people in the United States and Canada fight child labor, are they imposing Western standards on developing countries? Is that appropriate?

Once students have identified and discussed problems associated with child labor, this lesson (and Lesson 3) will encourage them to suggest solutions and predict their consequences.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

- Identify the causes of child labor and explore their interconnections.
- Analyze various perspectives on child labor.
- Brainstorm ways for companies to curb child labor and hypothesize outcomes of such policies.

CONCEPTS

- Social responsibility.
- Sourcing.
- Contractor.
- Auditor.

MAJOR QUESTIONS

- What factors must companies consider in evaluating their responsibilities for ending child labor?
- What steps should governments, employers, corporations, unions and non-governmental organizations take to end child labor?
- How would the actions affect the child laborers, companies, stockholders and consumers?

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Case study.
- Role play ("fishbowl").

MATERIALS ENCLOSED

- *Handout 2A*: The case-study story, "A Company's Dilemma."
- *Handout 2B*: A notetaking guide for reading the case study.
- *Handout 2C*: A score-tallying sheet for the discussion.
- *Handout 2D*: Role descriptions.

MATERIALS TO OBTAIN

- Name tags.

REQUIRED TIME

- Two, three or four class periods.

TEACHER PREPARATION

- Photocopy Handout 2A and Handout 2B for each student (if they have not already received them for Lesson 1 homework).
- Make one photocopy of Handout 2C. Then write the names of your students in the blanks. Make a photocopy for each scorer (see Step 4 under "Sequence").
- Make enough photocopies of each role description (Handout 2D) so each student can read their role.
- For the "fishbowl" discussion, arrange two concentric circles of chairs or desks — put six seats in the inner circle.

SEQUENCE

ANTICIPATORY SET

1. As you begin class, introduce yourself as Mike Bell. Tell students you have a problem, that you face a dilemma about child labor in the Dominican Republic.

2. If students have not read the case (Handout 2A) as homework from Lesson 1, distribute it to them. If they already have read it, discuss their responses to the notetaking guide (Handout 2B) to be sure everyone understands the case. Be sure to discuss their definitions of "social responsibility." What concepts or values does the phrase imply? Fair pay to employees? Community or environmental obligations? To whom are companies responsible? An alternative to the notetaking guide is asking students to summarize the case in writing or in a class discussion.

BODY

3. It's helpful for students to know what an exercise requires of them before handing out role descriptions. Explain the concept of a "fishbowl" role play: six groups of students are each assigned a role; students take turns sitting in the inner circle to play their group's role; the rest of the group sits in the outer circle, where they observe the performance of their group member in the inner circle.

4. Before handing out the six role descriptions, assign each to a group of at least two students. Ask each group to choose a member to begin in the inner circle.

Distribute a copy of Handout 2C to the scorer(s) and explain how each person will be evaluated on their role-play performance. The four left-hand columns list ways to earn a point. An individual scores, for example, when she or he draws another student into the conversation. The four right-hand columns list ways to lose a point.

It works best to find another member of the faculty or staff to score the discussion. Or you may keep score yourself (as you play the role of Mike Bell). Or you may ask outer-circle students to score their peers. Experience has proven, however, that it's difficult for students to both keep score and pay attention to the inner-circle discussion.

5. Once students understand the concepts and the scoring, distribute copies of a role description (one of the six parts of Handout 2D) to each group. Students then read the role's description and formulate their arguments, taking notes to help them during the discussion if they wish.

Distribute name tags, asking each student to wear the name of their character in the role play.

Define a word for students:

shareholder Someone who owns stock in a corporation and is, therefore, a part-owner of the firm. Shareholders want their corporation to make money because profits increase the value of the stock. When the company loses money, the shareholder's investment loses value. Since a corporation is owned by its shareholders, its executives (top managers) have a responsibility to maximize profits.

6. After each group is familiar with its role, begin Round 1. As Mike Bell, you

moderate. Explain that you have called together these individuals to help you make a decision. You're interested in hearing their views and arguments about the best course of action to resolve the company's dilemma. Since the students are unfamiliar with others' roles (and since they deserve the same chance to score points), ask the six to start by introducing themselves and explaining their connection to the company.

After that round, each group sends someone to replace their member in the inner-circle for Round 2. These students might briefly summarize their views about what the company should do. (If groups have more than four members each, split up this round so several members of each group get to make a point.)

Now that everyone is familiar with the various roles and viewpoints, encourage students to begin debating the merits of each argument so the company can reach a decision. Only inner-circle students may speak. People in the outer circle can make a point only by substituting for their teammate in the inner ring. An outer-circle Alexandra Brown, for example, may contribute by tapping the inner-circle Alexandra Brown, who is then obligated to step out of the inner circle and exchange seats. Students may be tentative at first, but they will learn to seamlessly infuse new ideas into the conversation.

As moderator, you may interject new questions to keep the discussion focused. You might conclude the role play by telling students "I just remembered I have a meeting to attend," and encouraging each of them to write a brief (one-page) memorandum suggesting the action they think the company should take.

7. After the role play, it's extremely important to debrief the class so students reflect on what has occurred. Some possible debriefing questions:

- How did students feel playing their roles? What was the easiest stage of the role play? The most difficult?
- What values did the discussion raise? Which do you feel are most important?
- Will reading the case study and participating in the role play affect their daily lives? Why or why not?
- Should U.S. companies have the right to contract labor in Central America and the Caribbean? If so, should they meet any conditions?
- What role, if any, should U.S. citizens, U.S. stockholders and U.S. consumers play?

EVALUATION

8. Using the scoring worksheet (Handout 2C), tally the positive and negative points for each student.

EXTENSION

9. This case study focused on corporate responsibility for ending child-labor abuses. You may wish to accompany it with another Resource Center of The Americas simulation, *The Cost of Your Shirt*, (see the back cover) which focuses on the interaction between workers and management. In that simulation, students play the roles of factory workers, factory managers, Guatemalan Labor Ministry officials, and U.S. activists. ■

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE

A Company's Dilemma

Mike Bell shifted restlessly in his air plane seat. He was finishing a three-week tour through Latin America after being promoted to vice-president of international contracts for Sport Products International (SPI). The tour had put him on more planes than he could remember. He was glad to be headed back home to New York. As he looked out the window over crystal blue water, he was surprised how tranquil the world suddenly seemed.

Then he remembered the sight of young girls in the Dominican Republic as they swept the factory floor between rows of sewing machines. Pushing those images out of his mind, he tried to focus on some of the new things he'd seen on this trip. He had enjoyed the scenery around the capital, Santo Domingo, a city on the nation's southern coast. After a day of hard work, he had taken a walk to unwind and see some of the sights. The city's colonial section was beautiful. Palm trees bordered narrow, cobbled streets filled with nice shops, restaurants and museums, including the house of Christopher Columbus' son.

Despite Bell's efforts to push business concerns out of his mind, his thoughts kept creeping back to the plant he'd visited just the day before. In that factory, outside Santo Domingo, women and girls were hard at work assembling the T-shirts and sweatshirts that would fill U.S. stores next spring. The clothes were made of the quality cotton on which SPI had prided itself for 50 years. The company bolstered its wholesome American image with its well-known motto, "Work hard. Play hard."

But that image didn't fit the sight of the girls in the factory. SPI headquarters had dispatched Bell to the Dominican Republic after hearing that a team of network-television reporters was investigating stories of child-labor abuses in an assembly plant in a free-trade zone outside Santo Domingo. Asking Bell to cut short a trip to Guatemala, his boss told him to check out the situation. Bell wasn't too surprised at the media attention, since he himself had been disturbed by the sight of young people sewing SPI clothing at plants in Jamaica, Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala.

Until this trip to Latin America, Bell had felt good about working for a company with a reputation for social responsibility. A year ago, after all, SPI had adopted a policy it called Global Guidelines for Business Partners, which prohibited using child labor. "Child" was defined as anyone under 14 or a nation's compulsory school age.

But Bell suspected that many of the workers in the plants he'd seen were younger than 14. He planned to bring this up with Eddie Silva, SPI's Santo Domingo–based Caribbean sourcing manager. Silva's job was finding sources — contractors that own factories known as *maquiladoras* — to manufacture SPI clothing. SPI itself did not own or manage the *maquilas*; the company simply purchased goods from the contractors that owned and managed them. These factories usually were located in a nation's free-trade zone to take advantage of reduced or eliminated taxes.

WHEN BELL LANDED in Santo Domingo he met Eddie Silva, a Dominican man who had lived and traveled in the United States. "You should know that there's some confusion about the company's guidelines," said Silva, as he drove Bell to an SPI contractor in the free-trade zone.

Bell stopped looking out the window. "Why?" he asked. "The company's guidelines are clear. We shouldn't use contractors that hire kids under 14. How much clearer could the policy be?"

"Look, it's just not that simple," Silva replied. "A lot of the contractors here use kids. Some of the girls come to the plant with their mothers, and I know there are some who are younger than 14. That's just how it's done here."

Adapted from "Third World Families at Work: Child Labor or Child Care?" by Martha Nichols in *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 1993. The characters and scenes reflect Amy Sanders' experiences working with small businesses in the Dominican Republic as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1990 and 1991.

"Haven't you told them about the guidelines?" Bell demanded. "Haven't you told them they have to do it differently?" Bell felt his hand tighten on his knee. The car bounced along the road through a few of Santo Domingo's poor neighborhoods, where people were sitting outside dilapidated houses. He wondered absently why so many people had nothing to do in the middle of the day.

Silva's voice drew Bell's attention away from the faces he was staring at through the window. "I'm not a policeman," he said. "Anyway, it's a lot more complicated than you think."

"What's so complicated? If contractors aren't in compliance with the guidelines, we threaten to cut them off until they are."

Silva impatiently leaned closer. "Do you realize what you're saying? The contractors here assemble half-a-million products a year for SPI, all at competitive prices."

"I know the numbers," Bell said. "But that doesn't change anything. You know the guidelines. We can't have kids in the plants, right?"

"It's just not as black-and-white as you're making this seem," responded Silva, looking carefully at Bell. "These contractors produce on-time with good quality. They provide jobs for local people, and there aren't many dependable jobs around here. People here need a stable job with a steady income to feed their families. These contractors meet our production quotas and we make sure their employees can eat."

"Fine," Bell interrupted. "But SPI has contractors in other countries that produce just as well and also manage to comply with the company's guidelines."

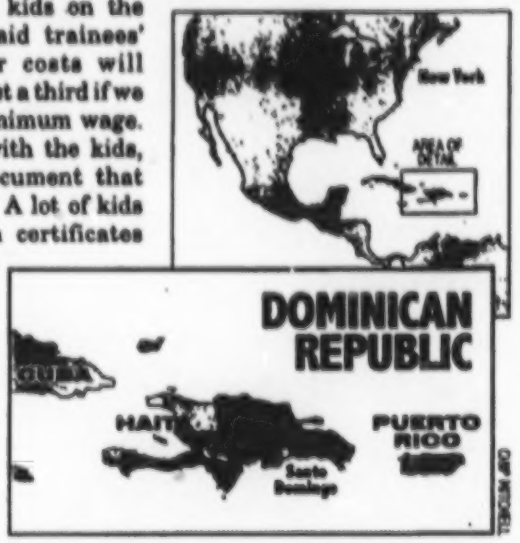
"O.K.," Silva said, looking weary. "If we ask them to, the contractors here will fire the kids under 14. But that will affect a lot of families, all of them very poor. Did you ever think about that? Hiring older workers that meet the guidelines will probably cost more money, so we may have to renegotiate our contracts."

"How much money?" Bell asked.

"Some of the young kids that come with their mothers aren't paid anything or very little. The older kids on the machines are paid trainees' wages, so labor costs will increase by at least a third if we pay the adult minimum wage. Or, if we stick with the kids, we'll have to document that they're really 14. A lot of kids don't have birth certificates here, so that could be very difficult."

"How can we find out their real ages, then?" Bell asked.

"It's almost impossible," Silva answered. "You can ask kids, but many will lie about their age because they need the job. You'll see when we get to the plant. We're almost there."



Population 7.5 million
Unemployment 30%
GDP Per Capita $1,000
Development Rank 109th*

* Of 191 nations in the 1994 United Nations Human Development Index, measuring a range of financial, medical, educational and social fields.

As they turned onto the road leading to the plant, Bell could feel the tension inside him rising. They walked in the door and looked around. The cement walls and floor were swept clean. In contrast to the bright, steamy sunshine outside, the room was fairly dark and the air stale. A single light bulb hung down by a wire over each sewing machine.

About 50 women and girls were in a large room. A young girl was picking up scraps of material on the floor next to a cutting table, while others were carrying material to and from the sewing machines. Whenever Bell looked in their direction, all of the girls and women looked down.

The plant manager, Manuel Acosta, led them on a tour. They saw the cutting tables, walked between rows of sewing machines, then went to a separate room where the clothes were steam-pressed before shipment to the United States.

As they walked towards Acosta's office, Silva stopped to ask a question of one of the

girls sorting scraps. She answered quietly, looking up shyly.

"She says she likes working here," Silva said. "Her mother works here and so do many of her friends. She wants you to know she's a good worker."

"But why isn't she in school?" Bell asked, thinking she looked about the same age as his 9-year-old daughter.

"Her family probably needs her to work," Silva replied. "Schools here cost money. Even public schools. Parents have to buy pencils, notebooks and textbooks. Many of them can't afford it. If they can afford to send a child to school, it's usually a son."

As they entered Acosta's office, Bell thought about what he'd seen at the plant. The conditions here weren't really all that bad. The plant was clean, and the working conditions seemed decent. Bell asked Acosta whether he kept records for all of the employees.

"Of course," he answered. "We have to pay the workers on a regular schedule."

"Do you make sure all the workers are at least 14?" Bell asked.

"Yes, of course, sir," Acosta replied. "We check on all of the skilled workers. The little ones you see aren't really workers. They just come in to be with their mothers and talk with their friends. They help their mothers — the same way they would if they were at home. They like coming here."

ON THE PLANE to New York, Bell kept replaying in his mind the visit to the Dominican plant. He could imagine *Prime Time Live* or *60 Minutes* digging into such a scene. He even imagined a lead-in to their story, "Did you know that those sweatshirts you wear were made by the sweat of children?"

Bell felt unsettled. He had a couple of options. If he followed the new company guidelines to the letter, SPI could demand that the Dominican contractor verify the age of each worker and hire only those 14 or older. But that would force some workers from their jobs, and he realized that their families needed the money. Tight compliance might not be the best deal for the company, either. SPI's production costs would increase if its contractors had to pay adult workers higher wages.

Another option would be for the company to shift production to another plant, but that would mean temporarily higher costs. It also would take jobs from workers that did quality, on-time work. With fierce competition in the apparel market, the company couldn't afford higher production costs. And U.S. retail stores were depending on SPI to deliver its spring line on time. He didn't want to jeopardize SPI's position with the retailers.

On the other hand, Bell remembered the faces of the girls in the plant and wondered how fair it would be to do nothing as his own daughter spent her days in school instead of working 10 hours a day. On top of it all, he wondered about the rumors of a television crew investigating child labor in SPI plants. How would an exposé affect the company's reputation?

Bell also realized that implementing the company's guidelines meant somehow making sure the contractors complied. He recalled a recent conversation with a human-rights advocate named Gloria Alvarez, who said policies and guidelines weren't enough, that there needs to be a process for monitoring and verifying compliance. She insisted that the monitoring be done by independent human-rights groups instead of a clothing corporation's own auditors. Others had suggested leaving the monitoring to the host country's government. Then there was the issue of *what* to monitor. Alvarez explained that it was important to check employees' working conditions in addition to their age.

As Bell's plane descended toward New York, he gritted his teeth, trying to decide whether to put SPI's Global Guidelines on Corporate Responsibility to the test. The whole issue seemed so complicated. What should he recommend to the company? Even though he believed in SPI's social responsibility, he also was responsible for its bottom line. ■

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE

Notetaking Guide

This worksheet accompanies the case study, "A Company's Dilemma" (Handout 2A). A case study is a tool that helps us understand complex choices facing decision-makers. Good case studies are based on real situations. The case you will consider is about a U.S. businessperson traveling in Latin America. He confronts the problem of child labor and must decide what to do about it. As you read, try to put yourself in his place. What would you do?

Here are a few definitions of words that may be unfamiliar:
sourcing Contracting with a *maquiladora* to manufacture clothing. A sourcing manager is responsible for finding the *maquila*.
contractor The supplier of goods to the sourcing manager.
monitoring Checking production sites for compliance with company policies or laws.
auditor A company employee or consultant that monitors a company's finances.
social responsibility _____.
WRITE YOUR OWN DEFINITION

To keep track of the issues as you read the case study, answer these questions:

MIKE BELL
- What company does he work for?
- What is his job in the company?
- Where is he traveling from?
- What are some of the dilemmas he faces?

SPORT PRODUCTS INTERNATIONAL
- How long has the company been in business?
- What kinds of goods does the company produce?
- How does the company define child labor?
- What are the company guidelines about using child labor?

EDDIE SILVA
- What is his job in the company?
- What is his attitude about child labor?
- What are some of the reasons he gives for the continued use of child labor?

THE CHILDREN AT SPI
- Are they mostly boys or girls?
- Do they go to school?
- How do they get hired?
- How does their labor affect the price of goods? Their quality? Their quantity?

MANUEL ACOSTA
- What is his attitude about child labor?

IF THE COMPANY takes steps to improve the child-labor problems, what are the possible effects of these actions . . .
- On the children?
- On families of the children?
- On company earnings?

FROM WHAT YOU'VE read, what are the factory's working conditions?

BELL FACES A DECISION about these issues on the plane to New York:
- What's his concern about investigative reporters?
- What do you think are his personal feelings about child labor?
- When he talks about SPI's "bottom line," what do you think he believes would be the company's best business decision?

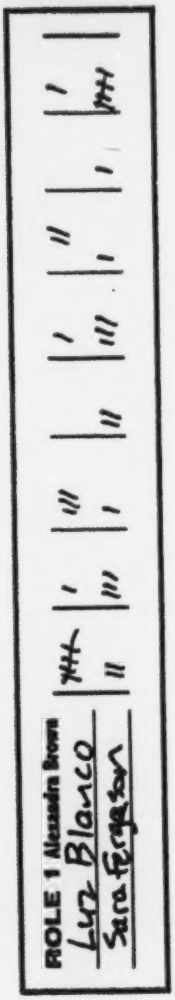
IF YOU WERE BELL, what (if anything) would you suggest that SPI do regarding its Global Guidelines for Business Partners? What is SPI's social responsibility?

HANDOUT 2C
PAGE 1 of 1

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE

Role-Play Scoring Worksheet

EXAMPLE



	POSITIVE (+)								NEGATIVE (–)
	Making a relevant comment or asking a question on a question	Using evidence to support a position or presenting factual information	Asking a clarifying question or moving the discussion along	Drawing another person into the conversation	Not paying attention, distracting others or making irrelevant comments	Interrupting	Monopolizing the discussion	Personal attack (–2)	
ROLE 1 Alexandra Brown									
ROLE 2 Joseph Jacobson									
ROLE 3 Eddie Silva									
ROLE 4 Maria Vásquez									
ROLE 5 Gloria Alvarez									
ROLE 6 Tom Cavanaugh									

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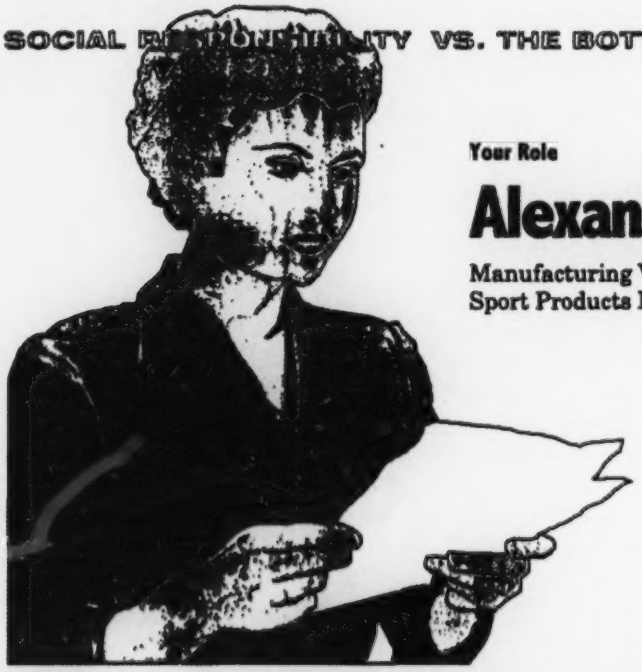
HANDOUT 2D
ROLE 1 6

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE



Your Role

Alexandra Brown

Manufacturing Vice-President
Sport Products International

In a role play, participants assume the identity of an individual in a certain situation. They research the situation to determine how they would react if they were personally involved. In this role play, you will debate or discuss the topic with other members of your group and class.

Mike Bell has presented the company with a difficult problem. In today's economy, global corporations like SPI do increasingly more business in developing countries. Why there? For the most part, because developing countries offer cheaper labor and fewer regulations compared to the United States.

Your main concern is the bottom line for SPI shareholders. You have some knowledge and concern about issues like child labor, but realistically don't see what a company like SPI can do about such complex problems.

In your many years in the workforce, you have had the opportunity to live and work in a number of developing countries around the world. In each of these places, kids have worked. The sad reality has been that these countries are so poverty-stricken that kids need to work to help out their families. Every developed or industrialized country that you have studied, including the United States, has gone through a "sweat shop" phase. Only 100 years ago, U.S. children worked in clothing factories in places like Lowell, Massachusetts.

Young workers often are quicker than workers in their 20s. Their eyes are better, their fingers more agile. And young workers are less likely to "rock the boat" by demanding more pay or time off. They also are less likely to help organize or join a labor union.

In your view, enforcing SPI's guidelines banning the use of child labor will not help a country like the Dominican Republic solve its complex problems. If SPI doesn't renew its Dominican contracts, the men, women and children who work there will be out of a job. This, it seems, wouldn't help anyone. SPI would also lose a reliable production source.

If SPI sticks to the letter of its guidelines, production costs will rise. This, in turn, would force the company to raise its prices on its goods sold worldwide. As it is, SPI is barely keeping its share of the market in North America and Europe. Raising prices would jeopardize the company's competitive edge.

The company owes it to its shareholders to continue seeking contractors that produce quality goods quickly and cheaply. ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

This role and the five others are based on responses by Peter Iacobi, John Dunlop, David Lindauer, Greg Talcott, David Grayson and Fernando Reimers to "Third-World Families at Work: Child Labor or Child Care?" by Martha Nichols in *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 1993.

HANDOUT 2D
ROLE 2-6

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE

Your Role

Joseph Jacobson

Marketing
Vice-President,
Sport
Products
International

In a role play, participants assume the identity of an individual in a certain situation. They research the situation to determine how they would react if they were personally involved. In this role play, you will debate or discuss the topic with other members of your group and class.

Mike Bell has presented the company with an agonizing problem. In today's economy, global corporations like SPI do business more and more often in developing countries. Why there? For the most part, because they offer cheaper labor and fewer regulations compared to the United States. Nevertheless, issues like child labor raise big questions about corporate values and ethics.

You are concerned about SPI shareholders and the company's profitability, but you also want the company to uphold its high standards and public image. The brand name SPI is priceless and should be protected. SPI products are recognized by consumers around the world. Brand names have become increasingly important to people when they decide what to buy.

Because SPI is so well-known, it must uphold its corporate reputation. Highly visible companies have a number of reasons to conduct business not just responsibly but in ways that cannot be portrayed as unfair, illegal or unethical. Protecting and strengthening a corporate reputation requires a long-term, strategic mind set.

You see a couple options:

- SPI could cut ties with the Dominican Republic contractor. This would be difficult and expensive, but may also head off a network-television news magazine from airing a story that does severe and lasting damage to the company's reputation.
- SPI could try some innovative programs for SPI workers to improve the situation in the Dominican plants. Any steps to solve problems would have to be realistic financially. SPI isn't in business to give handouts. But working with people in the Dominican Republic might bring long-term benefits to the company that would outweigh the short-term costs of programs. For example, SPI could help the kids working in the plant get an education.

You are aware that there needs to be monitoring of the *maquiladoras* to make sure they abide by company policy on child labor, and you think this can be done by the company's auditor. After all, the auditor has access to the contractors' records.

You are also concerned about your own job security. You have worked at SPI for 23 years and don't want to rock the boat by making too big a stink out of child labor, which could put your own job on the line. You just want the contractors to be good employers while providing the best quality for the lowest cost. ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

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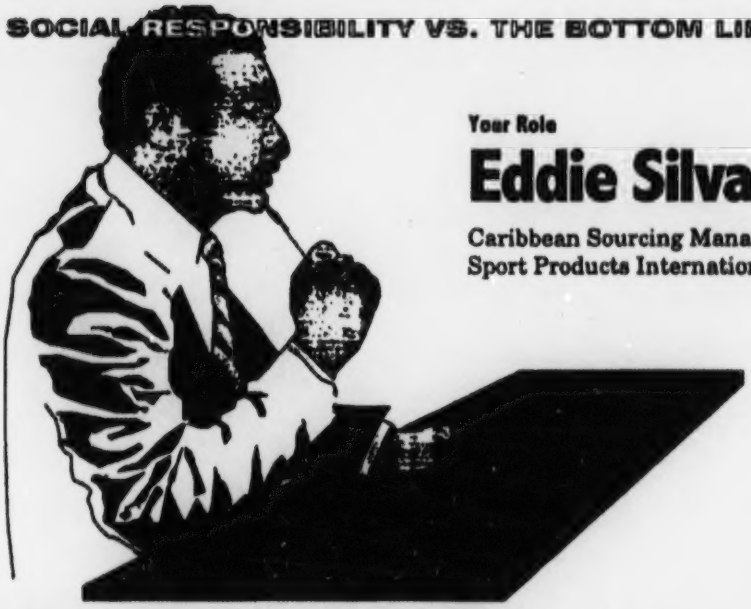
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE



Your Role

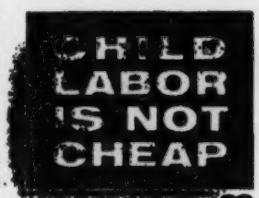
Eddie Silva

Caribbean Sourcing Manager
Sport Products International

In a role play, participants assume the identity of an individual in a certain situation. They research the situation to determine how they would react if they were personally involved. In this role play, you will debate or discuss the topic with other members of your group and class.

Mike Bell's visit to the Dominican Republic has made your life difficult. When he returned to the United States, he met with other top SPI officials about his findings from his trip. Since you play an important role in finding contractors to manufacture many SPI goods, company officials have summoned you to the New York office to discuss what steps, if any, SPI should take to comply with its Global Guidelines for Business Partners. Here are your views:

- The Dominican Republic has a different culture and different customs regarding work than the United States. Child labor is common — in fact, kids are expected to help their families. It's been that way for centuries.
- SPI hired you to find contractors who can deliver quality goods on time for the lowest price. You didn't accept the job to be a child-labor cop.
- It's difficult to document the kids' ages.
- All the other successful contractors are using kids.
- Dominican *maquiladoras* assemble 500,000 SPI goods a year — a big portion of the company's total production. If the company pulls out of the country, a lot of people will lose their job. It would harm a lot of poor families.
- The Dominican *maquiladoras* are not trying to exploit anyone. In fact, they are trying to produce jobs for the local economy.
- The Dominican contractors produce at competitive prices.
- SPI is lucky to have contractors that produce on time with good quality.
- If SPI decides to enforce its child-labor guidelines, someone will have to oversee the project. This will add to your workload, which is already extremely heavy.
- Big companies from the United States shouldn't impose their cultural standards on other countries. On one hand, they say they want goods produced cheaply. On the other hand, they say contractors must produce according to company rules. Which will it be?
- Kids have few better alternatives than working in SPI plants. They'd become maids, find a job in an unregulated industry or work on the street. It's better to keep them where they can be with family members. By giving these kids a job, SPI is doing them a favor. Besides, they seem happy and they never complain. ■



This role and the five others are based on responses by Peter Iacobi, John Dunlop, David Lindauer, Greg Talcott, David Grayson and Fernando Reiners to "Third-World Families at Work: Child Labor or Child Care?" by Martha Nichols in *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 1993.

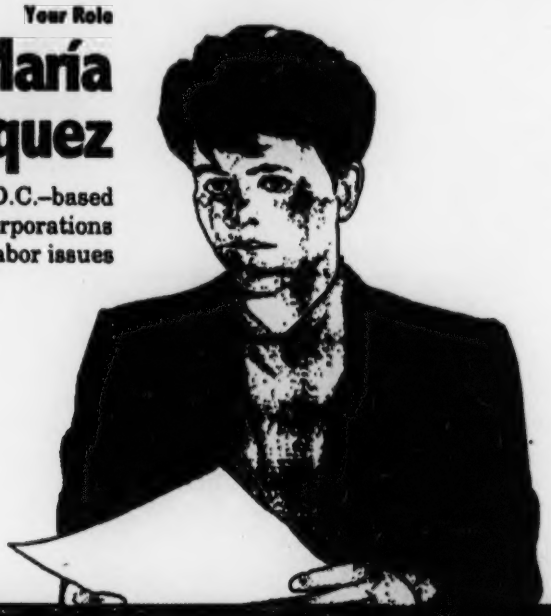
HANDOUT 2D
ROLE 4 G

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE

Your Role

María Vásquez

Washington D.C.–based consultant to corporations on labor issues



In a role play, participants assume the identity of an individual in a certain situation. They research the situation to determine how they would react if they were personally involved. In this role play, you will debate or discuss the topic with other members of your group and class.

You've done some work now and then with Sport Products International. Mike Bell, the company's new vice-president for international contracts, has called you for advice on how the company might comply with its Global Guidelines for Business Partners. You agreed to do some research into laws in the Dominican Republic and you're coming to a New York meeting with these suggestions:

- Dominican law states that children younger than 14 may not work more than seven hours a day, including rest intervals, no matter the industry. Bell must determine how many hours the children who produce SPI clothing are working.
- The Dominican Republic mandates education through 6th grade. Bell must find out if any of the children working for the SPI contrator are violating the education law. If so, the company must decide what it can do to get these children in school.
- Bell must find out whether SPI is breaking the Dominican laws, not just company guidelines, regarding work hours or education. If found guilty of violations, the government could punish the violators with prison terms, fines or both.
- Other companies recently have made news for their child-labor violations. Earlier this year, the issue of social responsibility was raised at a meeting of a competitor's shareholders. This sort of negative publicity affects a company's sales.
- The actions of SPI contractors may violate international laws such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It's unclear, however, whether U.S. corporations such as SPI must abide by the convention because the United States has not ratified it.
- If SPI decides to follow its guidelines against child labor, it must design and implement a verification process. One process would rely on Dominican government officials to do spot checks at the plants. ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

This role and the five others are based on responses by Peter Iacobi, John Dunlop, David Lindauer, Greg Talcott, David Grayson and Fernando Reimers to "Third-World Families at Work: Child Labor or Child Care?" by Martha Nichols in *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 1993.

HANDOUT 2D
ROLE 5 6

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE

Your Role

Gloria Alvarez

Human-Rights Advocate
Coalition to Abolish Child Labor Coalition

After Mike Bell returned from the Dominican Republic, he called you to talk about the situation there. Sport Products International officials now have called you to a New York meeting to discuss child-labor practices. They asked you to recommend what steps, if any, SPI might take to comply with its Global Guidelines for Business Partners. Here are your views:

- Although your group stands strongly against child labor, you're realistic about the problems facing the Dominican Republic. You would like child-labor abolished immediately, but realize this is impossible. You're actually pleased to see a company like SPI considering what it could do about the problem. You've come to the meeting with some practical suggestions.
- SPI could be a leader in trying to achieve some positive action. The company could work with other firms, labor unions, human-rights groups and the U.S. government to develop truly meaningful guidelines for the work conditions of children.
- SPI could set up programs to benefit child workers directly. The company could finance on-site doctor visits and meal programs. It could also set up an education program for children under age 14. For instance, SPI could pay child workers their salaries and benefits while they attend school, with the understanding that an SPI contractor will offer them jobs when they turn 14.
- You've heard officials of many clothing companies say they can't do anything about child labor in developing countries because "that's just the way things are done over there." Given the extremely low wages and unhealthy conditions that prevail in *maquiladoras*, you think it's a cop-out to argue that such work is a "positive experience" for children.
- You are tired of companies that have written safeguards without serious enforcement. You believe that since SPI has adopted and publicized its guidelines, it must act on them. You suggest that your organization or another independent human-rights group monitor all *maquiladoras* with SPI contracts. This means verifying workers' ages and constantly checking for workplace health and safety, which you consider to be a human right.
- SPI has a responsibility to contribute to the long-term productivity of its employees. Corporate ethics and social responsibility should be as important, if not more important, than the "bottom line." ■

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In a role play, participants assume the identity of an individual in a certain situation. They research the situation to determine how they would react if they were personally involved. In this role play, you will debate or discuss the topic with other members of your group and class.

HANDOUT 2D
ROLE G G

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. THE BOTTOM LINE

Your Role

Tom Cavanaugh

Assistant to the President,
Union of Needletrades,
Industrial and Textile
Employees (UNITE)

In a role play, participants assume the identity of an individual in a certain situation. They research the situation to determine how they would react if they were personally involved. In this role play, you will debate or discuss the topic with other members of your group and class.

After Mike Bell returned from the Dominican Republic, he called you to talk about the situation there. You frequently travel to the Dominican Republic to consult with labor unions in the nation's free-trade zones. Sport Products International officials now want you to attend a New York meeting to discuss child-labor practices. They asked you to recommend what steps, if any, SPI might take to comply with its Global Guidelines for Business Partners. Here are your views:

- Dominican law states that children younger than 14 may not work more than seven hours a day, including rest intervals, no matter the industry. The country has enacted other laws to protect children and end hazardous and exploitative working conditions.
- All workers, regardless of age, race, gender or sexual orientation, have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable to workplace abuses.
- Workers have a legal right to form unions and to bargain collectively for better wages and working conditions. This right, though often denied, is backed by many international conventions.
- Employers need to make sure that workers have a way to voice grievances without being punished or fired.
- If SPI is serious about ending child labor, it needs to raise all wages beyond the legal minimum. When adults make a decent wage to support their families, they have less incentive to send their children to work. Even quadrupling *maquiladora* wages would increase consumer prices only a few cents per garment. Child labor is not a necessary step out of poverty — it only fuels a nation's cycle of poverty.
- SPI could set up programs to benefit young workers directly. In accordance with Dominican law and company guidelines, children under age 14 should not be working at all, and those between 14 and 16 could still benefit from further schooling. SPI could arrange a part-time shift of four or five hours a day to enable children to attend school the rest of the day.
- You believe that since SPI has adopted and publicized its guidelines, it must act on them. This means verifying workers' ages and constantly checking for workplace health and safety, which you consider to be human rights. ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

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Working for Solutions

Many studies have suggested that students tend to feel cynical and powerless when they learn about critical problems but don't take action toward solutions. Exploring the prevalence and causes of child labor, for example, can lead to frustration and hopelessness. In this lesson, students learn about efforts, especially by youths, to change the difficult living and working conditions facing too many children around the world. Students then brainstorm how they themselves can bring about change.

Their ideas may include:

- Writing to lawmakers, companies, human-rights groups or labor organizations to express opinions or get more information.
- Visiting retail stores and speaking to their managers about products likely made by children.
- Creating posters, leaflets, petitions or bulletin boards to inform the public about consumer connections to *maquiladora* conditions.
- Holding a program to inform others in school or the community about child labor.
- Contacting advertisers or publications that promote child-made products.
- Writing and arranging a public-service announcement for radio or television.
- Designing a Web page, producing a video or organizing a campaign to draw attention to the role of consumers in pressuring companies to end unfair labor practices.
- Raising funds to support an organization working against child labor.

This lesson raises complex questions about child labor that may not have surfaced in Lessons 1 and 2, such as "If we end child labor, how will children earn enough money to eat?" Your role as an educator is not to provide the answers but to help students develop tools to understand the issue, identify alternatives, predict consequences, and decide how to respond and act. In our complex world, there are no easy answers and no simple solutions. We do students a disservice if we cloak this reality and fail to help them become informed, active citizens.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

- Discover ways that people work together for change.
- Propose and design an individual or group action plan that takes responsibility for social change.

CONCEPTS

- Citizen action.
- Action plan.
- Social change.

MAJOR QUESTIONS

- Who is responsible for confronting injustices?
- What is the best starting point to work for change? For example, government, international organizations, labor unions, community organizations, individuals?
- How can individuals bring about change?

EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

Our purchases of imported child-made products — clothing, rugs, food, toys and so on — connect us as consumers to child labor. The problem will continue unless consumers and others take action. This lesson encourages students to become active in efforts to end child labor.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Reading.
- Discussion.
- Action plans.

MATERIALS ENCLOSED:

- *Handout 3A*: Youth in Action.
- *Handout 3B*: Your Action Plan.
- *Appendix 3*: How to Contact U.S. Corporations.

TIME REQUIRED

- Varies according to time for action plan.

TEACHER PREPARATION

- Photocopy Handout 3A and Handout 3B for each student.

SEQUENCE

ANTICIPATORY SET

1. Drawing on what students have learned, help them brainstorm the most pressing causes and effects of *maquiladoras* and child labor. List the responses on the board to focus thoughts.

2. Discuss the idea of "citizen action." Ask students to share examples of citizen action they discovered during their research of child labor. Ask them to predict how citizen action could improve *maquiladora* working conditions and end child labor.

BODY

3. Distribute copies of Handout 3A and ask students to read it. Compare their predictions with the actual actions that young people are taking.

4. Distribute copies of Handout 3B and introduce the idea of developing an action plan. Encourage students to discuss their ideas with one another and with you.

5. Ask students to reflect on the ideas they have generated and to choose a project to complete. The project may require the work of an individual, a small group or the entire class (Appendix 3 provides company addresses and suggestions for letter-writing campaigns.)

6. Ask students who are working on an individual or small-group project to report back to the class on their progress.

EVALUATION

Students present a verbal and written overview of their projects to the class. Students may also write a journal entry that reflects on the most convincing "call to action" presented in class. ■

Youth in Action

Around the world, ordinary people are working for change through citizen action. People are working together to build schools and community centers, provide food and shelter for children living on the streets, and develop programs so that children can go to school instead of work every day. And, by becoming informed about the conditions in which many kids live and work each day, ordinary people are trying to influence government agencies and companies to investigate and end human-rights abuses, and to provide a decent life for children everywhere.

Why is citizen action important? By organizing democratically, people of all ages can develop creative solutions to problems. They can also ask others to participate in their social-change work. As you read the following stories about young people, consider these questions:

- What issues is each group addressing?
- Who's participating in the group?
- What are the group's goals?
- What tactics does the group use to accomplish its goals?

Craig Kielburger, 14, addresses reporters at a Minneapolis news conference in 1997.

CARRYING THE TORCH: Iqbal Masih of Pakistan became an indentured servant in 1986 when his parents offered his labor to a carpet manufacturer in exchange for a small loan. He was four years old.

Like thousands of young children in his country, Iqbal was chained to a loom for 12 hours a day, six days a week, hooking entire carpets for pennies. The kids were malnourished, unable to go to school and not allowed to talk among themselves as they worked. They even slept next to their looms. The repetitious work left many of their young fingers disfigured. Owners often hit and fined them for making mistakes. The fines, even after years of work there, would put the children deeper in debt than when they first arrived.

In 1992, after six years of hooking carpets, Iqbal heard of an organization called the Bonded Labor Liberation Front that worked against child exploitation. He contacted the group and managed to regain his freedom. Only 10 years old, he then committed his life to freeing other kids. In 1994, he traveled to the United States and spoke to Congress and others about the exploitation of children in the carpet industry.

He paid the ultimate price for his dedication. Shortly after Iqbal returned to Pakistan, an assassin fatally shot him in the head. No one has been convicted of the murder.

After reading a Canadian newspaper article on Iqbal's case, 12-year-old Craig Kielburger of Thornhill, Ontario, wanted to do something on behalf of child laborers. He convinced his parents to allow him to travel to Asia to meet with carpet makers.

When Craig returned, he sprang into action. He spoke with his classmates, his scout group and local human-rights organizations. With other students, they used the Internet to gather more information. Soon Craig led an effort to form the international group **Free the Children**.

Years later, Craig continues to travel around the world to give speeches, meet with child laborers, and investigate their working conditions. He has met with the

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HANDOUT 3A
PAGE 2 3

Canadian prime minister and testified before the U.S. Congress. He has appeared on network television, including a 1996 segment on the CBS news magazine *60 Minutes*.

'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.'

— MARGARET MEAD

In addition to its educational work, Free the Children is raising money for two projects that will support kids freed from bonded labor. One, a $75,000 project, backs the construction and operation of four schools in rural India. The other, with a $160,000 goal, will build and run a live-in center for 100 freed children in rehabilitation, providing basic schooling and work-skills training.

To begin participating, get an introductory packet through Free the Children, 16 Thornbank Road, Thornhill, Ontario, L4J-2A2, CANADA, www.freethechildren.org.

EXPOSING HYPOCRISY: For decades, the Walt Disney Company has prided itself on wholesome entertainment and products for children. But the company seems to care only about the kids who are *buying* the merchandise, not the kids *making* it:

- Workers producing Disney clothing in Haiti include many adolescents. They receive such low pay (28–30 cents per hour) that they can't feed their families. They are terminated immediately if sweatshop managers suspect union activities. Young female workers face rampant sexual harassment.
- On federal raids of Los Angeles garment sweatshops in 1996, agents discovered several child-labor law violations, one involving a 12-year-old girl, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. The workers at that shop were assembling Classic Pooh children's clothing for Disney.
- The same year of the Los Angeles raids, the company paid its chief executive officer, Michael Eisner, $96,000 *an hour*!

Students are supporting the young workers' rights by joining the **Disney Campaign** in care of the National Labor Committee, 275 7th Ave., New York, NY 10001, (212) 242-3002, (212) 242-3821 (fax), and writing letters to Eisner (see Appendix 3 for his address).

BOOTING CHILD-MADE BALLS: In 1996, sixth-graders at J.J. Hill Montessori School in St. Paul took a break from playing soccer to investigate the conditions under which their soccer balls were made. What did they learn? Most of the balls were hand-stitched by children's nimble fingers in Pakistani, Chinese and Indonesian sweatshops.

Not all soccer balls are produced under exploitative conditions. These balls are made by adults and stamped with the Federation International of Football Associations seal of approval. And it's these balls that the J.J. Hill students want to kick.

That's why they got the facts about child labor through the **FoulBall Campaign**. They called sporting-goods stores to compare costs of FIFA and non-FIFA balls. Then they started writing letters to Minnesota legislators, proposing a state law requiring that state-funded soccer programs use only FIFA-stamped balls.

The J.J. Hill students also surveyed the athletic directors of St. Paul public schools to find out if their soccer balls had been approved by FIFA and to request that they replace non-FIFA balls. They also drafted, circulated and presented a petition to the St. Paul School Board, asking that the school district purchase balls only with the FIFA stamp. The students also shared their research with city parks and recreation centers. Their next step is to raise the issue on the federal level by writing their U.S. senators.

The FoulBall Campaign is a program of the International Labor Rights Fund, 110 Maryland Ave. NE #74. Washington, D.C. 20002. (202) 544-7198. You can also get information on the campaign at www.freethechildren.org.

A FIRST STEP IN BANGLADESH: In Bangladesh, the country's powerful garment industry is committed to dramatic new measures under a 1995 agreement. The industry's workers, totaling more than a million, make Bangladesh a major garment exporters. Most of the workers are women or girls. In 1992, 50,000–75,000 of the workforce was under age 14, despite national laws against child labor.

The situation captured little attention until 1992, when U.S. Senator Tom Harkin introduced legislation that would have barred child-made goods from entering the United States. The bill didn't pass in 1992, but Harkin reintroduced it the next year. Bangladesh's garment employers responded by firing an estimated 50,000 children, about 75 percent of kids working in the industry.

The children went free, but were left with no skills, little or no education, and few alternatives in a desperately poor nation. Bangladeshi schools were either inaccessible, useless or costly. Follow-up visits by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), local nongovernmental organizations and the International Labor Organization (ILO) revealed that many of the children had become stone crushers, street hustlers or prostitutes — they were working under even more hazardous and exploitative conditions than before. Many mothers, additionally, had quit their jobs so they could look after the kids, who no longer could work in the garment factories.

After two years of difficult negotiations, the Bangladesh Garment Manufactures and Exporters Association, UNICEF and ILO signed an agreement in July 1995. The pact included four key provisions:

- Employers were to gradually remove all workers under age 14.
- Employers were to quite hiring such under-age children.
- The placement of children removed from the garment factories in appropriate educational programs with a monthly stipend (allowance).
- Employers were to offer the children's jobs to qualified adult family members.

The agreement was a positive first step for those seeking to eliminate hazardous child labor.

DEFENDING STREET KIDS: An estimated 7 million children live or work in the streets of Brazil. Some come from families that can't afford to feed them. Others have fled abusive homes.

Many end up sniffing glue or using other drugs to mask hunger pangs and help forget their circumstances. At the hands of police or vigilantes, many have been beaten up and some even killed for stealing food or clothing from local venders, behaving poorly, or merely appearing unkept. Between 1988 and 1990 alone, some 5,000 Brazilian street children were murdered. More than 90 percent of such murders are never brought to justice.

But there is hope. Brazilian street children are organizing themselves in the National Movement of Street Boys and Girls. At the local and national levels, they are teaching each other about their rights and lobbying local and national governments to recognize these rights. One way they have pushed their concerns onto the national agenda is by occupying government meeting halls.

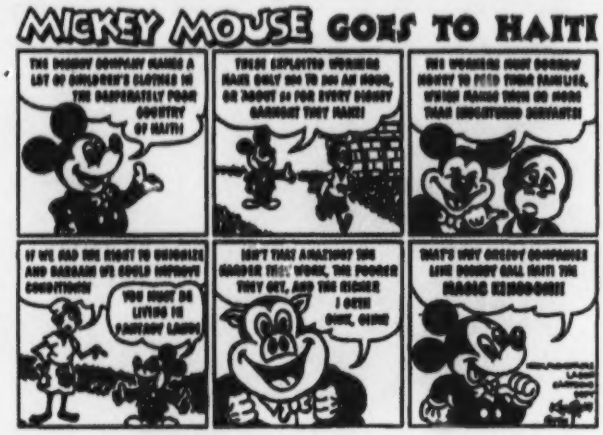
A California group is campaigning to put international pressure on the Brazilian government to investigate and prosecute individuals and organizations tied to the killings. Contact the **International Child Resource Institute**, 1810 Hopkins St., Berkeley, CA 94707, (510) 525-8866.

A SOILED INDUSTRY: A project that provides information on campaigns seeking justice for workers in the global garment industry is the **Clean Clothes Campaign**. To participate in letter-writing campaigns and petition drives, contact the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition, 317 17th Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414. (612) 627-9445. (612) 627-9450 (fax). ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

Your Action Plan

The world's complex problems have few easy answers, but this doesn't mean we should ignore what's happening. Now that you've learned so much about child labor, you have a chance to make a difference. Developing and carrying out an action plan requires creativity, attention to detail, and hard work. Effective actions often take a "trickster" approach to show a situation's irony or absurdity. This cartoon, for example, helps focus public attention on sweatshops and child labor through humor.


MICKEY MOUSE GOES TO HAITI
THE DISNEY COMPANY MAKES A LOT OF CHILDREN'S CLOTHES IN THE DESPERATELY POOR COUNTRY OF HAITI
THESE EXPLOITED WORKERS MAKE ONLY 30¢ TO DO AN HOUR, SO ABOUT $1 FOR EVERY DISNEY GARMENT THEY MAKE!
THE WORKERS MUST BORROW MONEY TO FEED THEIR FAMILIES, WHICH MAKES THEM SO MORE THAN UNCLOTHED DESPERATE!
IF WE HAD THE RIGHT TO UNIONIZE AND BARGAIN WE COULD IMPROVE CONDITIONS
YOU MIGHT BE LIVING IN FANTASY LAND!
ISN'T THAT AMAZING? THE HARDER THEY WORK, THE POORER THEY GET, AND THE RICHER I GETI
OINK, OINK!
THAT'S WHY DISNEY COMPANIES LIKE DISNEY CALL HAITI THE MAGIC KINGDOM!!!

How are you going to respond? Here's a process for developing an action plan:

- On another piece of paper, brainstorm and write down ideas of ways to respond to what you have learned. Let your creativity flow!
- Decide whether you want to work alone, in a small group or with the entire class.
- By _____(date), hand in a rough draft of your action plan.
- By _____(date), hand in a final version of your action plan.*

YOUR ACTION PLAN should answer these questions:

1. Are you going to work in a group? (If so, list the group members.)

2. What is your goal? What exactly do you want to accomplish?

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3. How will you accomplish this goal? What's your plan?
   a. Specifically, who will you need to contact or work with?

   b. What information and resources will you need?

   d. Where will you carry out your action?

   e. What is your time frame for carrying out your plan? Include a time line for the key decision/action points in your plan.

4. What will a successful action be? How do you define success? How will you evaluate whether your plan was successful?

• You may not be able to implement the entire plan by this date, but do take all the preliminary steps to make your project go. For example:
• If you plan to set up a booth at a local store to educate the public about child-labor abuses, have final, written approval from the store manager and final versions of materials you plan to distribute at the store.
• If you plan to set up a bulletin board, get final approval from anyone who needs to give permission and get the materials ready.
• If you plan to send a petition to Congress, have the petition's final version and signatures ready to mail.
• If you plan to show the video *Zoned for Slavery* at another school or organization, have final, written permission from the proper individual(s), a definite date for the screening, and background information to present before or after the screening. ■

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

APPENDIX 3
PAGE 1 1

How to Contact U.S. Corporations

Each individual was chief executive officer of his company as of January 1, 1997.

James E. Oesterreicher
J.C. PENNEY
6501 Legacy Dr.
Plano, TX 75024-3698
(214) 431-1000
(214) 431-1977 (fax)

Millard S. Drexler
GAP INC.
1 Harrison St.
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 952-4400
(415) 495-2922 (fax)

Richard T. Fersch
EDDIE BAUER, INC.
15010 NE 36th St.
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 882-6200
(206) 882-6383 (fax)

John J. Shea
SPEIGEL INC. (parent of Eddie Bauer)
3500 Lacey Road
Downers Grove, IL 60515
(708) 986-8800
(708) 769-3101 (fax)

Arthur Cinader
J. CREW
625 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10011
(212) 691-7034
(212) 886-2666 (fax)

LUXOTTICA GROUP (parent of Casual Corner)
44 Harbor Park Dr.
Port Washington, NY 11050
(516) 484-9010

Paul R. Charron
LIZ CLAIBORNE, INC.
1441 Broadway
New York, NY 10018
(212) 354-4900
(212) 626-1803 (fax)

Michael Eisner
WALT DISNEY CO.
South Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91521
(818) 846-7319 (fax)

David Glass
WALMART STORES
702 SW 8th St.
Bentonville, AR 72716

Philip H. Knight
NIKE, INC.
One Bowerman
Beverton, OR 97005

Robert J. Ullrich
DAYTON HUDSON CORP.
777 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 370-6948
(612) 370-6565 (fax)

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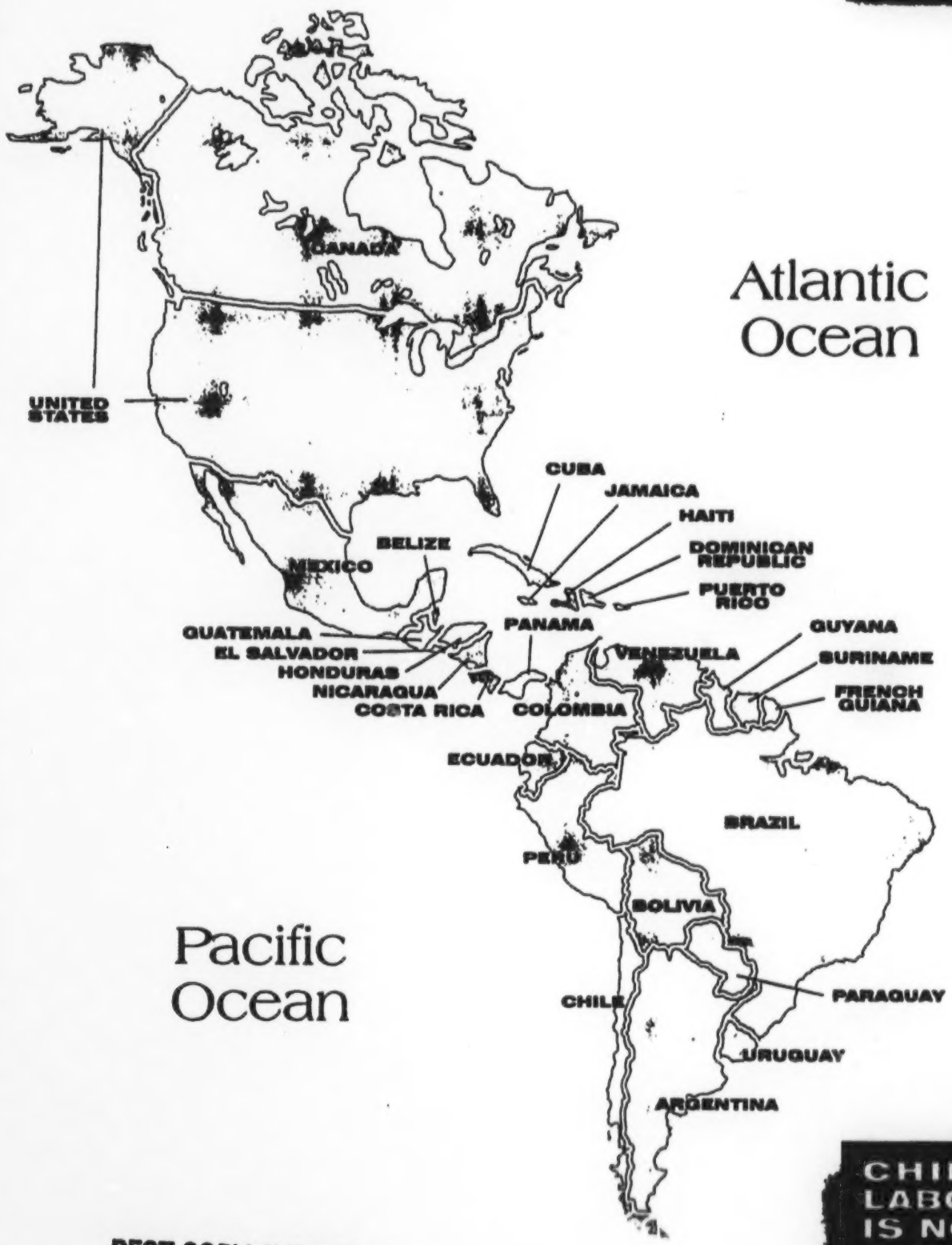

Atlantic Ocean

Pacific Ocean

CHILD LABOR IS NOT CHEAP

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From the authors of *Many Faces of Mexico*, this unit's three lessons focus on the 250 million children who spend most of their day on the job, including hundreds of thousands in our hemisphere who sew clothing and other goods for the U.S. market in *maquiladoras* (assembly plants that produce for export). The first lesson integrates the National Labor Committee video *Zoned for Slavery*. The second examines the conflict between corporate social responsibility and "the bottom line" through a role-play exercise surrounding a U.S. athletic-wear firm with a plant in the Dominican Republic. The third explores student actions that are forging new policies and practices in the United States and elsewhere. □

teaching tools
produced by the Resource Center

Many Faces of Mexico
An interdisciplinary guide about contemporary Mexico, including 350 reproducible handouts, for grades 7–12 and adults. 1998 (second edition). $39.95 ($65 with an 87-page Spanish-language supplement, *Las Caras de México*).

The New Global Economy: A View From the Bottom Up
A 23-minute video and workshop/game kit for advanced secondary students and adults. 1995. $85.

Central American Children Speak: Our Lives and Our Dreams
A 40-minute video and 28-page educator's guide (both available in English or Spanish) for grades 4–12 and adults. Winner of the National Educational Media Network's 1995 Bronze Apple award. 1994. $35 ($75 institution).

The Cost of Your Shirt
A nine-page simulation exercise for grades 7–12 and adults. 1993. $4.

Rigoberta Menchú: The Prize That Broke the Silence
A 26-page curriculum packet for grades 7–12. 1992. $7.

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